

## Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

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P 112128Z MAY 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY  
USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY  
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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY  
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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 562 - MAY 11, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY

OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ISRAEL. EMBASSY TEL AVIV COMMENTED THAT THE ISRAELIS REMAIN FOR THE MOST PART SKEPTICAL THAT RESTRICTIONS CAN BE IMPOSED ON THE SAUDIS ONCE THE F-15S ARE DELIVERED TO THEM. HOWEVER, SOME FORM OF COMPROMISE ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED BY THE US ADMINISTRATION WOULD MAKE THE PILL EASIER TO SWALLOW. THERE SEEMS TO BE A GOOD DEAL OF RESIGNATION THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE HAS BEEN DONE ON THE ISRAELI SIDE TO STOP THE SALE TO THE SAUDIS, ALTHOUGH BEGIN HAS COME IN FOR CRITICISM FOR HIS HANDLING OF ISRAELI POLICY WHICH ALLOWED THE US ADMINISTRATION TO GET THE UPPER HAND.

2. THE EMBASSY ALSO REPORTED THAT THE DMC SECRETARIAT, IN A DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH YADIN, HAS SHARPLY REPUDIATED THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTY DISSIDENTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ORGANIZING OPPOSITION TO YADIN'S AND THE PARTY'S PASSIVE ADHERENCE TO BEGIN'S FOREIGN POLICY

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LINE. AT A MEETING OF THE SECRETARIAT MAY 9, THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE YADIN "ESTABLISHMENT" AND THE MORE DOVISH SHINUI FACTION OF THE PARTY RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT. THE SHINUI GROUP, WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE REAL FOUNDERS OF THE DMC, HAVE CHAFED UNDER YADIN LEADERSHIP FOR SOME TIME. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

3. LEBANON. SOURCES OF OUR BEIRUT DEFENSE ATTACHE HAVE CLAIMED THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE BUILDING TWO NEW FORTIFIED CAMPS IN THE SOUTHERN BEKAA AREA. THE SOURCES SAID THAT THE SYRIANS ARE NOT OBSTRUCTING ANY MOVEMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THESE AREAS. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE BASES, WHICH THE PALESTINIANS BRAG WILL BE STRONGER THAN TAL ZAATAR, WOULD MOVE THEIR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FURTHER NORTH AWAY FROM THE ISRAELIS AND UNIFIL. (CONFIDENTIAL)

4. SYRIA. THE SYRIANS HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN SOLVING THE PROBLEMS THAT DREW THEM INTO LEBANON OVER TWO YEARS AGO. AN UNENDING SERIES OF CRISES HAVE FORCED SYRIAN POLICY MAKERS TO CONCENTRATE ON IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS TO THE DETRIMENT OF SYRIA'S LONGER TERM OBJECTIVE OF

STABILIZING THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

5. SYRIA'S IMMEDIATE CONCERNS, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY DAMASCUS, ARE TO ACHIEVE COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND TO PREVENT THE RECURRENCE OF MAJOR INCIDENTS. THE SYRIANS ARE ALSO CONCERNED BY WHAT APPEARS TO THEM TO BE AN ATTEMPT BY SHAMOUN, THE LEADER OF THE LEBANESE FRONT, TO BLUNT SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN LEBANON AND ULTIMATELY TO FORCE DAMASCUS OUT. (ACCORDING TO A SOURCE OF OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BEIRUT, SHAMOUN HAS SAID THAT THE SYRIANS SHOULD LEAVE LEBANON NEXT OCTOBER WHEN THE CURRENT ADF MANDATE ENDS.)

6. IN VIEW OF THEIR CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT IN LEBANON  
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SO FAR AND THEIR SIZABLE STAKE IN ITS NEAR-TERM AND MID-TERM FUTURE, THE SYRIANS WILL FIND IT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THEIR TROOPS IN LEBANON, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY USE THE THREAT OF WITHDRAWAL TO PRESSURE CERTAIN FACTIONS. AMONG THE MAJOR FACTORS INHIBITING WITHDRAWAL ARE:

(A) THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR PROBABLY WOULD RESUME.

(B) SECTARIAN TENSIONS IN SYRIA WOULD INCREASE.

(C) THE INFLUENCE OF ANTI-SYRIAN FOREIGN ELEMENTS IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THE IRAQIS AND THE FRENCH WOULD BE ENHANCED.

(D) A WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE VIEWED AS A SIGN OF SYRIAN WEAKNESS FOLLOWING RECENT CLASHES WITH THE CHRISTIANS.

7. WITH REGARD TO THESE CLASHES, THE SYRIANS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE RESULTED IN THE STRENGTHENING OF THEIR POSITION AT HOME AND IN LEBANON. UNTIL RECENTLY, THE SYRIAN REGIME HAD BEEN CRITICIZED FOR FAVORING THE CHRISTIANS. THE CLASHES HAVE ILLUSTRATED FOR SUNNIS IN SYRIA AND LEBANON AND FOR THE PALESTINIANS THAT THE ASSAD REGIME REMAINS THEIR PRIMARY DEFENDER.

8. NEVERTHELESS, THE SYRIANS ARE LIKELY TO AVOID TOO CLOSE AN IDENTIFICATION WITH ANY LEBANESE FACTION OR THE PALESTINIANS. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH ALL PARTIES, WHILE MAINTAINING MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY. THIS HAS BEEN SYRIAN POLICY FOR THE PAST 18 MONTHS. BEYOND STOPPING THE FIGHTING, HOWEVER, THIS POLICY HAS HAD LITTLE SUCCESS IN PROMOTING SYRIAN INTERESTS IN LEBANON IN THE PAST AND APPEARS UNLIKELY TO  
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